

Electrical Code – Egress and storage*



The Canadian Standards Association creates national standards on a wide variety of subjects. These standards are adopted/modified by the various provinces to meet their requirements. In British Columbia, CSA C22.1:21 *Safety Standards for Electrical Installations* was adopted under the *Safety Standards Act* and *Electrical Safety Regulation*. It is then referred to as the BC Electrical Code.

Technical Safety BC is the authority that deals with the *BC Electrical Code*. They deal with certification, installation and operating permits, licences, and homeowner permits. Before handling electrical items, such as replacing a wall switch, determine if you are authorized to do the work or if a licensed electrician is needed. Check if a permit is required. For more details on when a permit is not needed, refer to the *Electrical Safety Regulation*, section 18.

Why is it important?

Electricity is dangerous and can cause shocks, arc flashes, or even electrical fires. Recognize these hazards and take appropriate precautions.

Improper storage of materials and restricted access to electrical equipment can also create hazards. For example, if a worker becomes entangled in machinery, the emergency stop button must be hit, but access may be blocked by pallets.



In CSA standard C22.1: 21 section 2 General rules, there are rules related to how we access and store materials around electrical equipment. Here are some rules you should be aware of:

- Keep a minimum working space of 1 m with secure footing shall be provided and maintained about electrical equipment such as switchboards, panelboards, control panels, and motor control centres that are enclosed in metal
- Maintain an unobstructed means of egress to each room containing electrical equipment and each working space around this equipment
- Passageways and working space around electrical equipment shall not be used for storage and shall be kept clear of obstructions
- Adequate illumination shall be provided to allow for proper operation and maintenance of electrical equipment
- Flammable material shall not be stored or placed in dangerous proximity to electrical equipment
- Electrical equipment having provision for draining moisture shall be installed so that the drainage path is not impeded

- Adequate ventilation shall be provided to prevent the development around electrical equipment of ambient air temperatures in excess of those normally permissible for such equipment

The employer should also designate these areas as a safety zone and mark them according to warn workers to keep access and egress free, and to prevent storage of materials.

When performing workplace inspection, check to ensure these rules are being followed.



For additional resources visit:

[Electrical Safety – Basic Information](#) | Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety
[CSA C22.1:21 \(free access link\)](#) | CSA Group

